What Happens During a Delta Flight for an Unaccompanied Minor?

QUICK ANSWER:

Your child boards first during priority boarding and sits near the flight attendant station. Crew checks on them regularly throughout the flight, assists with meals and bathroom, and ensures comfort. During connections, a Delta agent escorts the child between gates. At arrival, the child stays seated until an agent escorts them to the pickup person for ID verification. Call +1 855 203 2961 for flight-specific UM care details.

SENDING A CHILD ALONE? Call Delta Airlines
+1 855 203 2961 (Available 24/7 | UM Bookings Are Phone-Only)
Press 0 to skip menu — UM service requires advance booking
Best time: Tue-Wed 6-8 AM ET | Source: delta.com

WHAT YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES DURING UM TRAVEL:

1. Call +1 855 203 2961 to book — UM reservations cannot be made online

2. Verify your child's age qualifies: 5-14 mandatory UM, 15-17 optional

3. Ages 5-7: nonstop/direct only | Ages 8-14: connections allowed

4. Fee: $150 each way domestic | ~$300 each way international

5. Provide child's name, age, parent info, and designated pickup person details

6. Parent receives gate pass to escort child through security to the gate

7. Pickup person must present government photo ID matching UM paperwork

8. Call +1 855 203 2961 at least 3-5 days before travel for best availability

What Happens at the Departure Gate?

After the parent escorts the child through security to the departure gate, the parent identifies themselves to the gate agent and hands over the child along with the UM paperwork. The gate agent confirms the child's identity, reviews the UM documentation, and notes the child on their boarding manifest as a UM passenger. The child boards the aircraft before other passengers during priority boarding, allowing them to settle into their seat and get comfortable before the cabin fills. The parent watches from the gate area until the aircraft door closes and the flight pushes back. Call +1 855 203 2961 and ask about departure gate procedures specific to your airport.

The gate handoff is the most emotional moment for many parents and children. Prepare your child in advance for the goodbye at the gate. Some children benefit from a special activity or comfort item for the flight. The gate agent is experienced with UM handoffs and will reassure both parent and child. The parent must remain at the gate until the flight departs in case of last-minute issues. Call +1 855 203 2961 and discuss any concerns about the handoff process with the agent during booking.

Where Does the Child Sit on the Plane?

Delta typically seats UM passengers near the front of the cabin close to the flight attendant galley or station for easy monitoring throughout the flight. The specific seat assignment is made by the UM coordination team and may differ from a seat the parent selected during booking. The seating priority is safety and accessibility for the flight attendant team, not passenger preference. If the child has a strong seat preference such as window for comfort, mention it when booking by calling +1 855 203 2961 and the agent notes it as a request, though the UM team makes the final assignment.

Younger children (ages 5-7) are typically seated closer to the front where the lead flight attendant can maintain direct visual contact. Older children (ages 8-14) may be seated slightly further back but still in a monitored zone. Siblings traveling together are seated adjacent to each other. Call +1 855 203 2961 and mention any seating concerns, such as a child who gets anxious near the window or needs an aisle for bathroom access.

How Do Flight Attendants Monitor UM Children?

Flight attendants check on UM passengers at regular intervals throughout the flight, including after boarding, during beverage and meal service, periodically during the cruise phase, and before landing preparations. They ensure the child is comfortable, has access to food and beverages, can use the restroom with assistance if needed, and is not experiencing anxiety or distress. The flight attendant team is briefed about UM passengers during their pre-flight briefing and knows which children are traveling alone. Call +1 855 203 2961 and ask about the specific level of monitoring your child will receive based on their age.

Parents can provide special instructions to the flight attendant team through the UM paperwork or by telling the gate agent at handoff. Common instructions include dietary restrictions or allergies, medication schedules, anxiety triggers and calming strategies, and whether the child should be limited in screen time or beverage choices. The flight attendant team follows reasonable parent instructions. Call +1 855 203 2961 and discuss any special monitoring needs during the booking call.

What Happens During a Connection for a UM?

During a connection, a Delta agent meets the child at the arriving aircraft door before the child enters the terminal. The agent escorts the child through the terminal to the departing gate, staying with them the entire time. If the connection time allows, the agent takes the child to a restroom and gets them a

snack or drink. The agent remains with the child at the departing gate until the next flight boards, then hands the child to the boarding gate agent for the next segment. The child is never left alone during the entire connection process. Call +1 855 203 2961 and ask about connection procedures at your specific connecting airport.

Connection times for UM passengers should be generous to allow for the escorted transfer process. Delta's system automatically blocks connections with insufficient time for UM escort. Minimum connection times for UM may be longer than standard passenger minimums. Call +1 855 203 2961 and the agent selects connections with adequate time for safe supervised transfer between gates.

What If the Child Is Scared or Has a Problem During the Flight?

Flight attendants are trained to handle anxious, scared, or upset children with patience and care. If a child becomes distressed, the attendant comforts them, offers distraction activities, and assesses whether the situation requires any intervention. For serious issues such as a medical concern, the flight attendant follows standard medical protocols including contacting ground-based medical support if needed. The attendant updates the UM paperwork with any notable events during the flight. Call +1 855 203 2961 before travel and discuss any anxiety or behavioral concerns your child has so the agent notes them for the crew.

Preparing your child mentally for the flight experience reduces the likelihood of in-flight distress. Discuss what to expect: the sounds of the engines, turbulence bumps, the beverage service, how to use the call button to ask a flight attendant for help, and how to use the restroom on the plane. Practice these scenarios at home. Call +1 855 203 2961 and the agent can provide age-appropriate preparation tips based on your child's age.

What Happens When the Plane Lands?

Upon landing, UM children remain seated while other passengers deplane. A Delta agent comes onto the aircraft after the main cabin has emptied and meets the child at their seat. The agent escorts the child off the aircraft, through the terminal, and to the designated UM pickup area. At no point is the child left unattended between landing and pickup handoff. The agent waits with the child until the designated pickup person arrives and presents matching government-issued photo ID. Call +1 855 203 2961 to verify the destination airport's specific pickup area and procedures.

The pickup person should arrive at the airport before the flight's scheduled arrival and proceed to the UM pickup area. Airport information desks can direct them if the location is unfamiliar. The pickup person must present the exact government ID that matches the name on the UM paperwork. No exceptions are made for name mismatches, missing ID, or unauthorized persons. Call +1 855 203 2961 and confirm pickup logistics before travel day.

What Activities Can the Child Do During the Flight?

UM children can use personal electronic devices, read books, do homework, draw, play games, watch in-flight entertainment, listen to music, and engage in any quiet activity during the flight. Delta does not provide special entertainment or activity kits for UM passengers, so parents should pack age-appropriate activities in the child's carry-on. Recommended items include tablets with downloaded content, headphones, coloring books, small games, snacks, and a comfort item like a stuffed animal. Call +1 855 203 2961 and ask about the in-flight entertainment available on your child's specific aircraft.

Keep the child's carry-on organized and easily accessible under the seat. The flight attendant can help the child access items from the overhead bin if needed. Include a written card in the carry-on with the child's name, flight number, parent's phone number, and pickup person's name in case any paperwork is misplaced. Call +1 855 203 2961 for additional packing suggestions based on the flight duration.

How Does the UM Service Handle Meals and Snacks?

On flights with meal service, UM children receive the same meal options as all passengers. Flight attendants ensure UM children are served and assisted with meal selection, tray setup, and cleanup. On shorter flights without meal service, the standard beverage and snack service applies. Parents should pack additional snacks in the child's carry-on for the flight, especially for young children who may not like the available options or who need to eat on a specific schedule. Call +1 855 203 2961 and notify the agent of any food allergies or dietary restrictions so the information is noted for the crew.

For children with severe allergies such as peanut allergies, Delta takes precautions but cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment. Inform the agent at +1 855 203 2961 during booking, remind the gate agent at handoff, and pack safe alternative snacks. The flight attendant team is made aware of allergies through the UM briefing. Call +1 855 203 2961 and discuss allergy management strategies with the agent.

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Unaccompanied Minor Age and Route Rules

Age	UM Service	Routes Allowed	Fee
Under 5	Not accepted (too young)	Cannot fly unaccompanied	N/A

5-7 years	UM required (mandatory)	Nonstop and direct only	$150 each way
8-14 years	UM required (mandatory)	Nonstop, direct, and connections	$150 each way
15-17 years	UM optional (can fly alone)	All routes (no restrictions)	$150 if requested
5-14 on international	UM required (mandatory)	Select int'l routes only	$300 each way (varies)
15-17 on international	UM optional	All int'l routes	$300 if requested
Last flight of the day	Not accepted (ages 5-14)	Risk of overnight strand	N/A (policy block)
Connecting flights (5-7)	Not accepted (nonstop only)	Nonstop and direct only	N/A (policy block)

How Does Delta Compare to Other Airlines?

Policy	Delta	American	United	Southwest	Alaska	JetBlue
UM age range	5-17	5-17	5-17	5-11	5-17	5-13
UM fee domestic	$150 each way	$150 each way	$150 each way	$50 each way	$75 each way	$100 each way
Connections (young)	8+ only	8+ only	5+ (some)	5+ (some)	8+ only	None (nonstop only)
Nonstop required	5-7: nonstop/direct	5-7: nonstop/direct	Varies	No	5-7: nonstop	All ages: nonstop only
Int'l UM	Select routes	Select routes	Select routes	Not available	Select routes	Not available
Booking method	Phone only	Phone or online	Phone only	Online or phone	Phone only	Phone only

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People Also Ask

Q: What is Delta's unaccompanied minor policy?

Children ages 5-14 must use Delta's Unaccompanied Minor (UM) service when flying without a parent or guardian. Children 15-17 may use UM service optionally. The fee is $150 each way domestic. UM includes dedicated staff supervision from check-in through pickup at destination. Booking is phone-only by calling +1 855 203 2961. Call +1 855 203 2961 to arrange UM travel.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: How much does Delta charge for unaccompanied minors?

Delta charges $150 each way for domestic unaccompanied minor service and approximately $300 each way for international routes. The fee covers supervision from check-in through handoff to the designated pickup person at the destination. The fee applies per child, so two children traveling together pay $300 each way domestic. Call +1 855 203 2961 for exact fees on your route.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: What age can a child fly alone on Delta?

Children ages 5-14 can fly alone using mandatory UM service. Ages 5-7: nonstop and direct flights only. Ages 8-14: nonstop, direct, and connecting flights. Ages 15-17: can fly alone without UM service, or optionally use UM service for an additional fee. Children under 5 cannot fly unaccompanied. Call +1 855 203 2961 for age-specific rules and available routes.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: How do you book an unaccompanied minor on Delta?

UM bookings must be made by calling +1 855 203 2961 because the online system cannot process UM reservations. Provide the child's name, age, flight details, parent/guardian information, and designated pickup person's details. The agent books the flight, adds UM service, and explains all procedures. Call +1 855 203 2961 at least 3-5 days before travel for best availability.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: Can a 5-year-old fly alone on Delta?

Yes, children as young as 5 can fly on Delta using the mandatory UM service. Ages 5-7 are restricted to nonstop and direct flights only, with no connections. The $150 domestic fee covers full supervision. A parent must escort the child through security to the gate. Call +1 855 203 2961 to book UM service for a 5-year-old and verify nonstop route availability.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: What happens at the airport for an unaccompanied minor?

The parent checks the child in at the ticket counter, completes UM paperwork with pickup person details, receives a gate pass to escort the child through security and to the gate, and hands the child to a Delta agent at the gate. The agent supervises boarding and seating. At destination, a Delta agent walks the child to the designated pickup person and verifies ID. Call +1 855 203 2961 for the complete UM airport procedure.

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Q: Can unaccompanied minors fly connecting flights on Delta?

Children ages 8-14 can fly connecting flights as unaccompanied minors. Children ages 5-7 are restricted to nonstop and direct flights only due to the added complexity of connection transfers. Delta staff escorts the child between connecting gates. The last connection of the day is not available for UM to avoid overnight stranding. Call +1 855 203 2961 for connecting flight UM availability.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: Can unaccompanied minors fly internationally on Delta?

Yes, select international routes accept unaccompanied minors. International UM fees are approximately $300 each way, higher than domestic. Additional documentation including passport, visa, and destination country UM requirements apply. Not all international routes accept UM. Call +1 855 203 2961 at least 2-4 weeks before international UM travel for route availability and documentation requirements.

Read our complete guide for more details >

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: UM fee?

A: $150 each way domestic. ~$300 international. Per child. Call +1 855 203 2961 for exact fees on your route.

Q: Age range?

A: 5-14: mandatory UM. 15-17: optional. Under 5: not accepted. Call +1 855 203 2961 for age-specific rules.

Q: Book online?

A: No. UM bookings require calling +1 855 203 2961. Phone-only process. Call at least 3-5 days before travel.

Q: Connections?

A: Ages 8-14: connections allowed. Ages 5-7: nonstop/direct only. Call +1 855 203 2961 for route options.

Q: International?

A: Select routes. Higher fee (~$300). Extra docs required. Call +1 855 203 2961 for international UM availability.

Q: Pickup person?

A: Must present government photo ID matching the name on UM paperwork. No exceptions. Call +1 855 203 2961 to set up.

Related Articles

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> How Much Does Delta Charge for Unaccompanied Minors?

> How Do You Book an Unaccompanied Minor on Delta?

> What Are Delta's Age Requirements for Unaccompanied Minors?

> What Happens During the Flight for a Delta Unaccompanied Minor?

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Written by Travel Policy Research Team | Reviewed by Senior Aviation Editor

Sources: delta.com, U.S. DOT

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